B-4483

McCOY/FULTON THEATER

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

This rather small, but elegant theater was built in 1915. Originally, Fulton Avenue was laid out with a rotary at Baker Street, known as Baker Circle. The first buildings on the site conformed to the circle. By 1915, however, the circle had disappeared and a theater could be built right up to the streetfront. The theater has a stucco/plaster Italian Renaissance Revival facade.

Today, a modern storefront church conceals (or has resulted in the removal of) the original facade.

D INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES FORM SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER SURVEY

| NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM |
|---|
| 1. Name of Property |
| historic name McCoy Theater (1915); Fulton Theater (1927) |
| other names/site number Gateway Church of Christ/ B-4483 |
| 2. Location |
| street & number 1567 North Fulton not for publication |
| city or town Baltimore vicinity N/A state Maryland code MD county Baltimore City code 510 zip code 21217 |
| 3. State/Federal Agency Certification N/A |
| |
| . National Park Service Certification N/A |
| |
| 5. Classification |
| Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply) x private public-local public-state public-Federal |
| Category of Property (Check only one box) x building(s) district site structure object |
| Number of Resources within Property |
| Contributing Noncontributing 1 buildings sites structures objects Total |

| SDI/NPS NRHP | Registration | Form |
|----------------|--------------|------|
| (McCoy/Fulton | Theater) | |
| (Baltimore Cit | ty, MD) | |

B-4483

| (Mccoy/Fulton Ineatel) (Baltimore City, MD) | (Page 2) |
|--|----------|
| Number of contributing resources previously listed in the Nati Register 0 Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if propert of a multiple property listing.) N/A | onal |
| 6. Function or Use | |
| Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) Cat: RECREATION & CULTURE Sub: theater | |
| Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions) Cat: RELIGION Sub: religious facility | |
| Description Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instruction | |
| Beaux-Arts Materials (Enter categories from instructions) foundation roof walls STUCCO (plaster?) other METAL | |
| Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current conproperty on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation | |

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/Recreation

Ethnic Heritage

Architecture

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form B-4483 McCoy/Fulton Theater) (Baltimore City, MD) (Page 3) _____ Period of Significance 1915 to 1940 Significant Dates 1915 Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) Cultural Affiliation N/A Architect/Builder _____ Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheet. 9. Major Bibliographical References Maps Bromley, G.W. and Co. Atlas of the City of Baltimore, Vol. 1. Philadelphia: 1885, 1896. Hopkins, G.M. Map of the City of Baltimore, Maryland. 1876, 1877. Sanborn Map Company. Insurance Maps, Baltimore, Maryland, Vols. 2,3, and 7. New York: 1890, 1901, 1914, 1928. Simmons, Isaac. 1852 Revision of the Thomas H. Poppleton Map. Baltimore: 1852. See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Lot = 37' 6" x 142' (and lot 37?)

| (Baltimore City, MD) | (Fage 4) |
|--|-------------------|
| UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a cone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing 3 | |
| 2 4 | |
| See continuation sheet. | |
| Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries o | of the property.) |
| Block 21, Lot 32 (& 37?) | |
| Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries wer The boundaries are based on a city lot(s) retaining ori | |
| 11. Form Prepared By | |
| name/title Elizabeth Jo Lampl & Kay Fanning/Architect organization Robinson & Associates date July 1992 street & number 1710 Connecticut Ave., NW telephone city or town Washington state DC zip code 2000 | (202) 234-2333 |
| Property Owner | |
| (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO. name Gateway Church/Disciples of Christ street&number 1562 or 1563 N. Fulton teleph city or town Baltimore state MD | 7,5 |

NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

Jnited States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 5 & 6 Page 1

Fulton Theater
name of property
Baltimore City, Maryland
county and State

HISTORIC CONTEXT

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Economic;

Social/Education/Cultural

Resource Type:

Category: building(s)

Historic Environment: urban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): commerce (back half);

recreation and culture (theater)

Known Design Source: F.E. Tormey

*PS Form 10-900-a 8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

McCoy/Fulton Theater name of property Baltimore City, Maryland county and State

DESCRIPTION

Like the Schanze Theater (see B-4482), this facade is a tribute to a bygone era when Sandtown-Winchester and Penn-North witnessed a thriving entertainment industry.

THe original building on the site was a pre-1885 dwelling that was converted to a store. The original Baker Circle embraced the area that is today the front half of the building. (See attached.) When Baker Circle was eradicated and Fulton Avenue straightened, this theater followed.

ne two-story, three bay facade has a triumphal arch motif. A large arched opening framed by two-story Ionic columns carries a large entablature crowned by a modillioned cornice. The Fulton Theater is built of brick and has a flat roof. Its facade appears to be composed of plaster.

The theater's first floor has been covered by a modern storefront church, with its entrance placed in the northernmost bay. The church's exterior hides the entire lower half of the facade. There may have been windows originally in the first floor to either side of the arched entrance.

Above, where the details of the theater are still visible, a keystone block with a classical mask joins the moldings of the arch and the adjoining cornice; the reveal of the recessed arch is coffered. There are lion heads on the sections of projecting cornice to either side.

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 1

McCoy/Fulton Theater name of property Baltimore City, Maryland county and State

SIGNIFICANCE

At the time of construction in 1915, the McCoy Theater, later known as the Fulton, was heralded as the largest movie theater in Baltimore. The facade of the handsome theater building is still largely intact, though partly covered by a modern storefront at the first floor. It uses a Roman Renaissance triumphal arch motif to great effect: the arch occupies the whole of the facade, providing a grand and theatrical flourish on this major thoroughfare.

altimore was a city known for having an active movie-going population. It has been estimated that in 1920, 150,000 people out of a population of approximately 850,000 attended at least one movie per week, with the big vaudeville houses apparently drawing the largest crowds. In and around the survey area, there were seven movie theaters by the 1930s, providing an important part of the community's social life. All theaters were located on Fulton, Pennsylvania, or Lafayette.

Pennsylvania Avenue was the hub of cultural life in the 1920s and '30s, the years of Baltimore's African-American Renaissance. It was the major shopping street and the center of entertainment. The African-American community's famous Easter parade marched down Pennsylvania; other parades were held by such lodges as the Elks and Masons, and Halloween revellers. Pennsylvania was the center of jazz. Its night clubs, such as the Royal, Ganbee's, and the Ritz Cafe, attracted every major African-American performer. The Royal, located outside the survey area, ranked with Harlem's famed Apollo. 10

The survey areas theaters include the still-extant Schanze and Fulton

Robert Kirk Headley, Jr, "Exit: A History of Movies in Baltimore" (Master's thesis, University of Maryland, 1974) 20.

Thomas Edsall, "Pennsylvania Avenue: Declining for Generation"

Baltimore Evening Sun, 10 May 1967, Enoch Pratt Free Library vertical file)

p.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 2

McCoy/Fulton Theater name of property Baltimore City, Maryland county and State

theaters, and several that are now demolished: by 1914 there were the Red Mill Moving Picture Theater (1510 Lafayette), the Crescent Moving Pictures Theater (1509 Lafayette), the Moving Pictures (Fulton between Woodbrook and Francis, next to the Parkwood Hotel), and, after 1928, the Metropolitan, at 2501 Pennsylvania. The Royal (Douglass) Theater (1329-33 Pennsylvania Avenue; built in 1921 and razed in 1971), was the most important theater in the 1930s, offering live theatrical and musical performances in addition to movies. The Royal was a major venue on the jazz and big band circuit, and attracted major African-American artists in its heyday--the late 1920s through World War II.

The years 1908 to 1914 were a boom time for the construction of movie theaters. The earliest were built in Baltimore by 1908, including eight in that year alone, the number increasing to a total of 113 theater buildings by 1914. Most theaters were small, seating only about 300 people. Architectural style and decoration could be plain or quite elaborate: many early theaters had lavish classical ornamentation, while others were built in existing dwellings. Because theaters did not have a respectable reputation, their owners tried to create a comforting, homey atmosphere. 12

The program at the theaters typically consisted of a feature movie and two shorts; this was usually accompanied by live entertainment on piano, organ, or drums, and the larger theaters sometimes had entire orchestras. Slide shows previewed movies or illustrated songs, and short skits followed the movie. 13

When the Lord Calvert Theaters Company opened the Fulton Theater on 30 October 1915, they named it the "Gertrude McCoy" after a popular actress of the day. The theater was designed by the architect F.E. Tormey, who had made

Carleton Jones, <u>Lost Baltimore Landmarks: A Portfolio of Vanished Buildings</u> (Baltimore: Maclay, 1982) 64.

¹² Headley 8-9.

¹³ Headley 8-13.

'PS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 3

McCoy/Fulton Theater name of property Baltimore City, Maryland county and State

a study of movie theaters in the East. The cost of of construction was \$12,000. The theater seated approximately 500 people. It had a Renaissance Revival-style facade finished in a light gray stucco. Originally, it had a parapet with balusters and short piers ran along roofline. A handsome marquee is evident in a photograph of 1935, with the name Fulton in metal letters, perhaps spelled out in lights, surrounded by a decorative wavy border of metal or tile. A Roman Renaissance-style grille filled the arch. Two small aedicules to either side of the entrance held posters; if these still exist, they are now hidden behind the modern storefront.

rank H. Durkee, C.W. Pacy, and Charles E. Nolte were early entrepreneurs in the Baltimore movie business. They began their partnership, Durkee Enterprises, around 1916, and owned or operated over a dozen Baltimore movie theaters by the late 1920s. They acquired the Schanze by 1926, and the Fulton in 1927. The Rome Circuit of movie theater operators controlled the Schanze and Fulton theaters at one time in the 1930s or 1940s. 15

The name of the theater was changed to the Fulton in 1927, the year it was bought by Durkee Enterprises. Closed in 1951, the theater building has since been used as a food market, and was converted to a church by the early 1970s.

Headley 72.

¹⁵ Headley 18.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 1

Fulton Theater
name of property
Baltimore City, Maryland
county and State

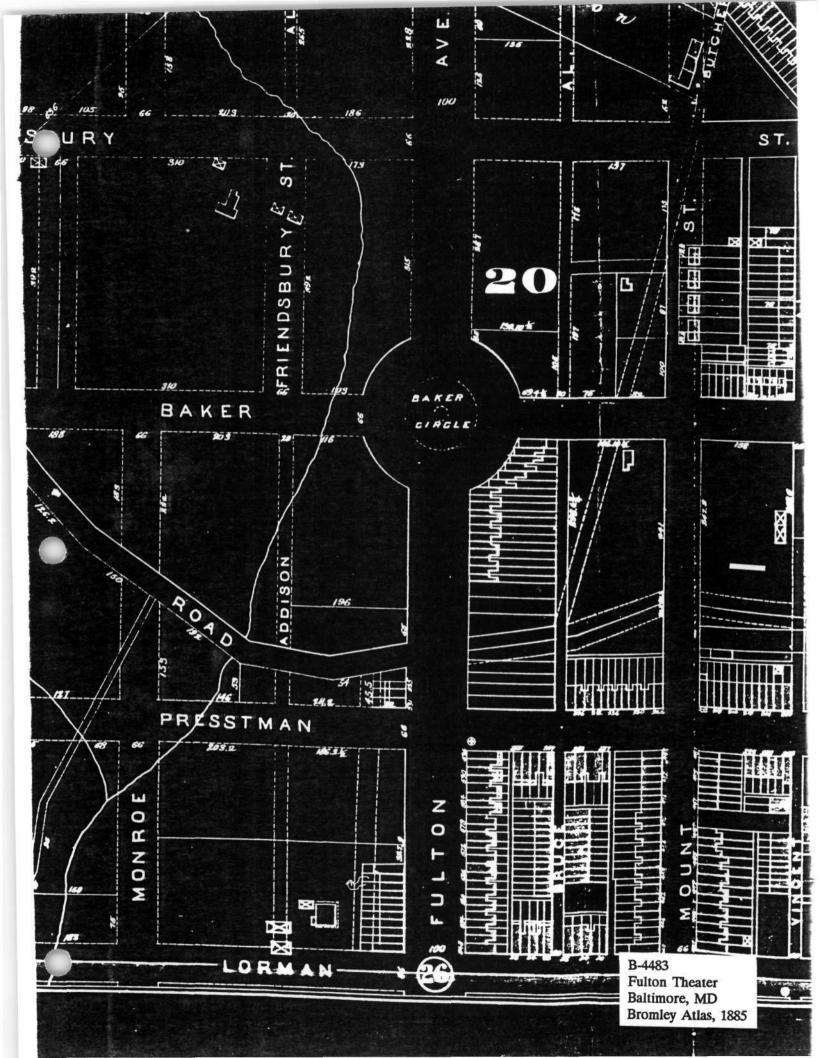
BIBLIOGRAPHY

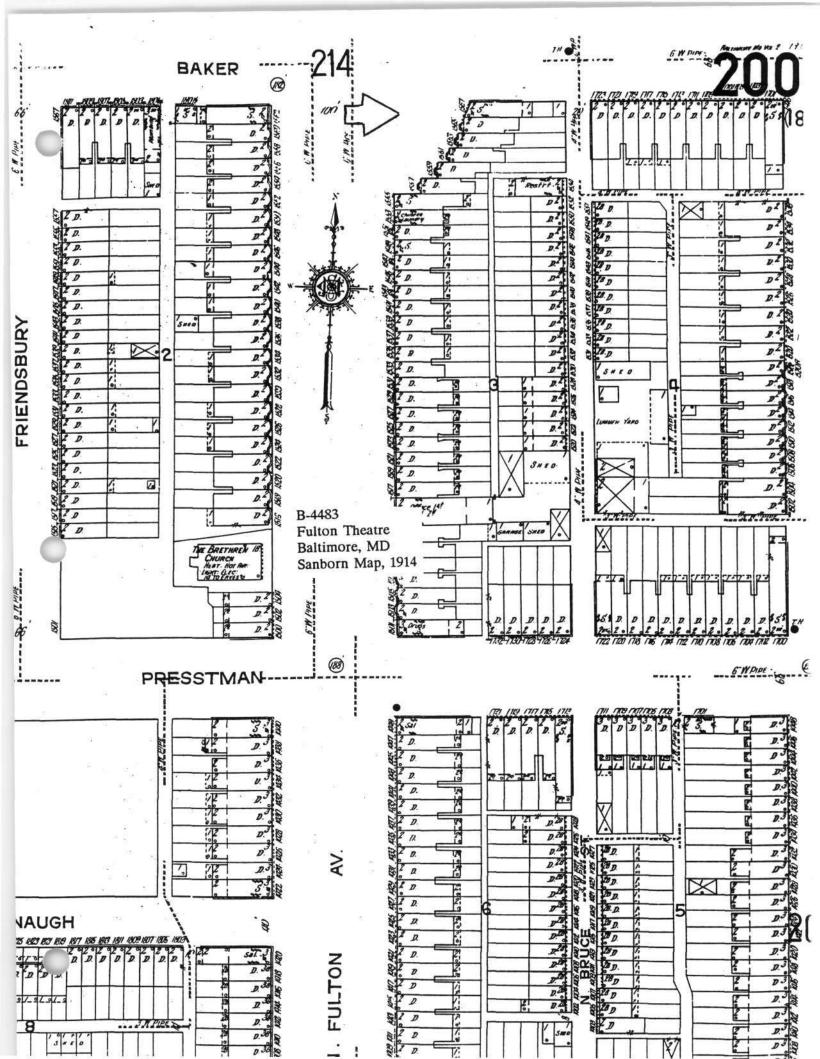
Edsall, Thomas. "Pennsylvania Avenue: Declining for Generation." <u>Baltimore Evening Sun</u> (10 May 1967, Enoch Pratt Free Library vertical file): np.

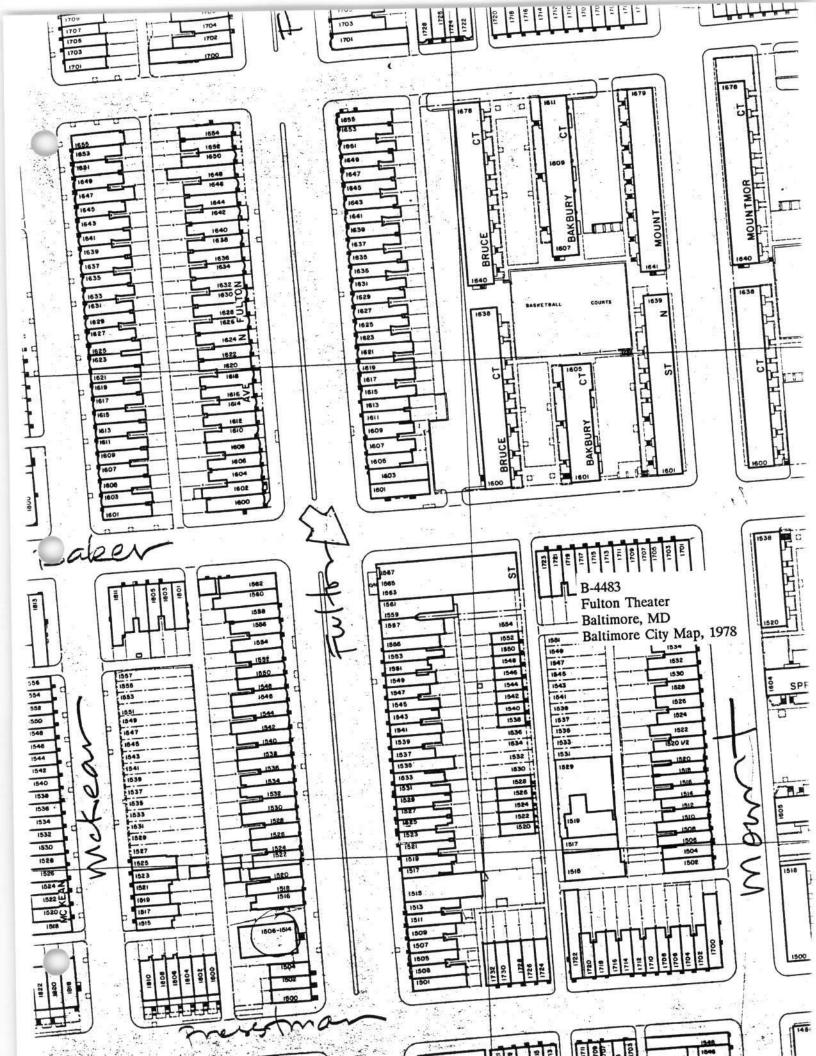
Headley, Robert Kirk, Jr. "Exit: A History of Movies in Baltimore." Master's thesis, University of Maryland, 1974.

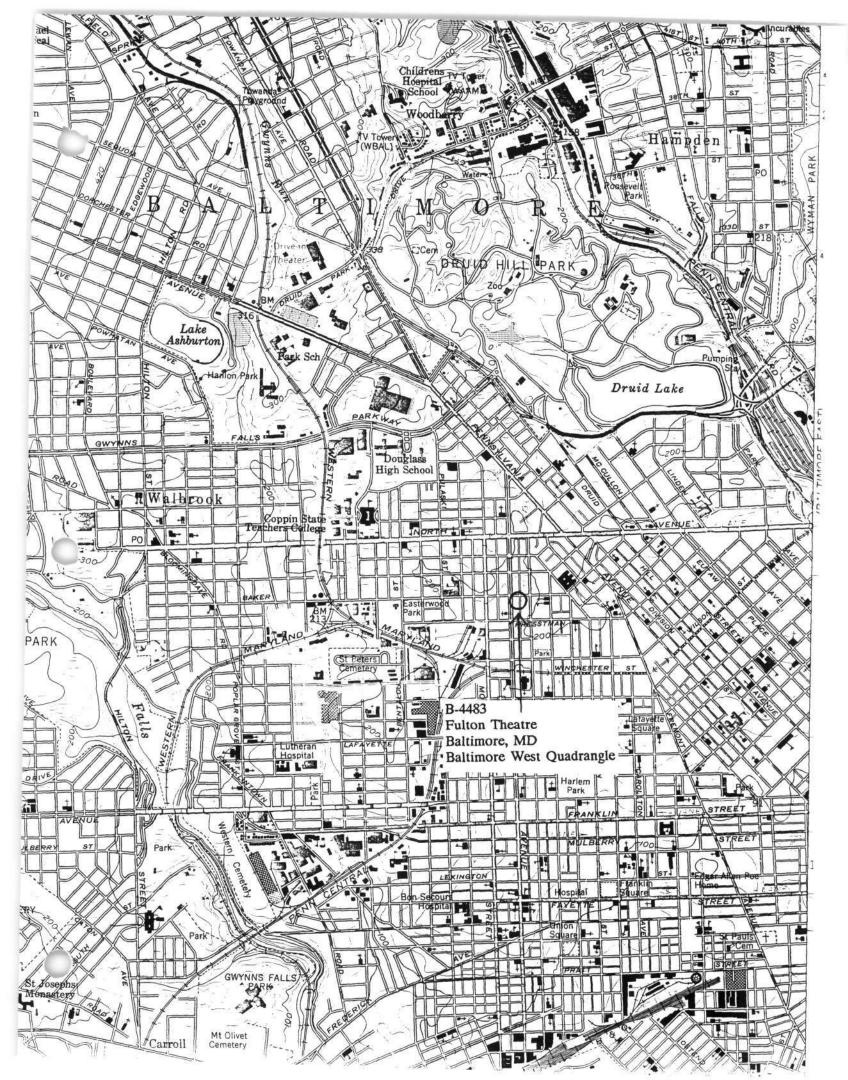
Jones, Carleton. <u>Lost Baltimore Landmarks: A Portfolio of Vanished Buildings</u>. Baltimore: Maclay, 1982.

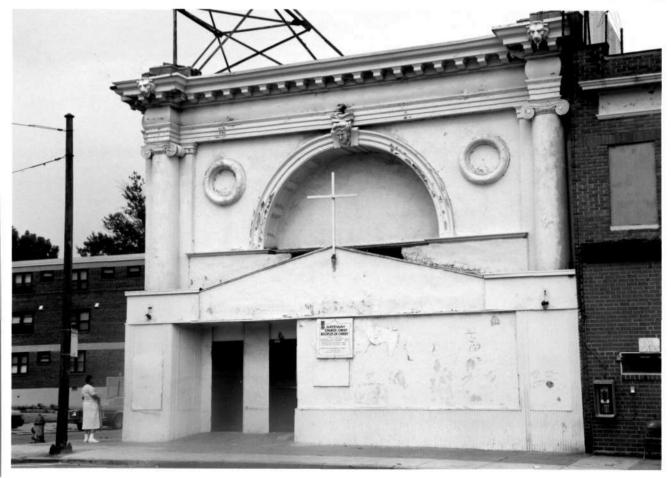
| SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER/PENN-NORTH Survey No. <u>B-4483</u> | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| RECONNAISSANCE-LEVEL SURVEY FORM | | | |
| Neg. No6/16 | | | |
| Historic Name Fulton Theater | | | |
| Current Name/Use Gateway Church of Christ | | | |
| Address(es)1567 North Fulton | | | |
| Resource/Property Type Rowhouses Commercial Structure | | | |
| Attached Y Public/Institutional Building Public Housing Site Other | | | |
| Stories2 Note:back half was earlier store; theater is expansion | | | |
| Primary Material <u>brick, plaster</u> Secondary Material <u>stamped metal</u> | | | |
| Roof Formflat | | | |
| No. of Bays in Unit/Facade 3 If Rowhouse: Flat Front Swell Front Porch | | | |
| Window Type: Double-Hung Door Type: Single-Leaf 1/1 Sash Double-Leaf 2/2 Sash Number of panels (if visible) 2/1 Sash Transom Other Sash Transom | | | |
| Architectural Style Beaux Arts Date c. back, pre-1901; theater, post-1914 | | | |
| Noteworthy Features: Facade has triumphal arch motif, large arched opening between two small wreaths, framed by 2-story Ionic columns carrying projecting entablature. Modillioned cornice crowning full entablature. Keystone with mask. Lions at projecting cornice ends. Modern storefront added to 1st floor obscures much detail. Rear half is pre-1901 store; front post-1914. | | | |
| Alterations: Formstone ? Stucco Vinyl/Aluminum x Window/Door Changes Awnings Missing Cornice Elements x First-Floor Use Change x Other: added storefront | | | |
| Status:x Occupied Vacant Mixed NR Evaluation:x Contributing Non-Contributing Recommended for Intensive Level:x_ Yes No | | | |
| Surveyor: Joey Lampl Affiliation: Robinson & Associates Date: February-April 1992 | | | |



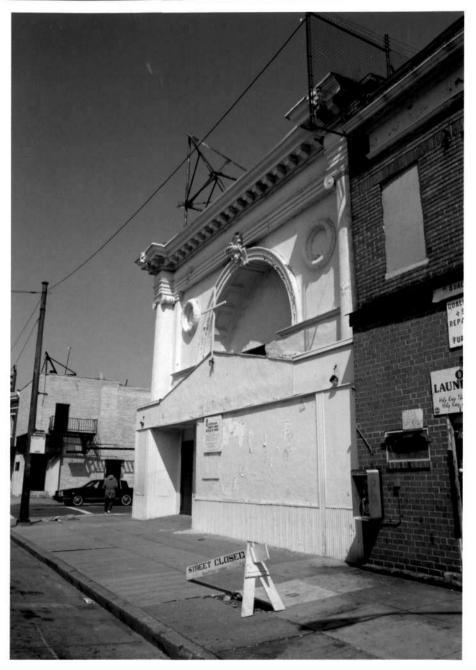








Sandtown-Windhester/Penn-north #8-4483 Baltimore, MD Leonard Jackson July 1992 City of Baltimore, Commission for Historical and architectural preservation Historia: 1 Fulton theater current: Gateway Church of Christ 1567 North Fulton WEST ELEVATION 1 of 2 Roll 9/ Nog 30



SANDTOWN - WINCHESTER / PENN- NORTH #8-4483 BALTIMORE, MD ELIZABETH QO LAMPL MARCH 1992 CITY OF BALTIMORE, GMMUSSION FOR HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION HISTORIC: STORE/THEATER ADDED ON PRONT /2 of LOT CURRENT : GATEWAY CHURCH OF CHRIST MCOY/ 1567 N. FULTON MOTAUSUS TROW ROLL 6/NEG 16 2 of 2